In the claims:

All of the claims standing for examination are presented below with appropriate status indication. Standing claims 1- 4, 9, 12-15, and 26-28 are canceled. Claims 31-36 are added and presented for examination.

31. (New) In a data-packet network having a label-switching sub-network with one ingress node and one egress node, with at least two nodes internal to the sub-network connected by a plurality of parallel links, a method for routing packets through the sub-network and the parallel links while ensuring in-order delivery for unique packet flow defined by unique source/destination pairs, comprising the steps of:

(a) creating a sufficient number of label-switched paths (LSPs) from the ingress node to the egress node that each packet flow may have a unique LSP;

(b) associating each packet flow with one of the created LSPs.

32. (New) The method of claim 29 wherein the number of LSPs created is equal to the least-common multiple of the number of links between each individual node in the node path.

33. (New) The method of claim 29 wherein, in step (a) a mask value is added to a label value in the process of setting up the LSPs, and the LSPs are all created in response to a single signal sent from the ingress node.

34. (New) A routing system in a data-packet network having a label-switching sub-network with one ingress node and one egress node, with at least two nodes internal to the sub-network connected by a plurality of parallel links, the system comprising:

a mechanism for creating a sufficient number of label-switched paths (LSPs) from the ingress node to the egress node that each packet flow may have a unique LSP; and

a mechanism associating each packet flow with one of the created LSPs.

35. (New) The system of claim 32 wherein the number of LSPs created is equal to the least-common multiple of the number of links between each individual node in the node path.

36. (New) The system of claim 32 wherein, in step (a) a mask value is added to a label value in the process of setting up the LSPs, and the LSPs are all created in response to a single signal sent from the ingress node.